DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 615 SO 012 582

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TITLE Canadian Content Kits--Grades 1-12. A Report of an Assessment.
INSTITUTION Alberta Univ., Edmonton.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 40p.; For related documents, see ED 152 638 and SO 012 581.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Evaluation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Criteria; *Formative Evaluation; Models; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Program Improvement; Relevance (Education); Research Reports; *Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS Canada

ABSTRACT

The document presents a formative evaluation of 13 Canadian studies kits being developed in Alberta, Canada. The objective was to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the kits as well as to determine whether the program development model was effective in producing quality materials. Quality was defined in terms of internal consistency, inter-unit consistency, program consistency, external consistency, and significance. Questionnaires were mailed to teachers and students in 74 K-12 pilot classes; 1488 were returned. In the area of internal consistency, questions relating to focus and explicit activity sequences and objectives were raised. Inter-unit consistency, especially in skill development, was almost impossible given the process used to develop the kits. Questions raised relating to program consistency were aimed at refining congruency with provincial handbooks. External consistency examined congruency with current social studies practice. Questions were raised relating to all 16 characteristics of sound programs. All respondents reacted positively to the significance of the Canadian content. Questions raised concerned a logical overall plan for content coverage in all the kits and avoidance of overlap and imbalance. Possible recommendations included hiring overall editors, developing a series of "How to Do It" booklets, finding resolutions to consistency problems, instituting quality control, and presenting content summary charts in each kit. Appendices present the program analysis form and student questionnaires. (CK)

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CANADIAN CONTENT KITS - GRADES 1 - 12

A Report of An Assessment

Submitted to:

Alberta Education
The Government of Alberta

SO 012 581

by

D. Massey and W. Werner
University of Alberta

Summer 1977

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MAY 9 1980

Preface To The Study

The approach taken in this study is based upon certain premises concerning formative evaluation.

Curriculum development is a task which requires much time, energy, resources and expertise. As a result, developers tend to become committed to the worthwhileness and relevance of the programs which are produced. Egos become an integral part of program development products. It may become difficult, therefore, for individuals to detach themselves from their work and to critically reflect upon what they have done.

The task of formative evaluation is to help foster this reflective attitude while respecting the developer's commitment and ego involvement in what they have developed.

One way to accomplish this task is to pose questions to the developers rather than to make judgmental statements. Questions tend to invite responses which often clarify the issue and which allow consensus among developers. On the other hand, judgmental statements tend to elicit reaction and defense. The purposes of formative evaluation in this project were better served through questions.

The aim of this evaluative study was to present the program developers with questions for discussion purposes. The legitimacy and relevance of the questions posed ultimately rests with the team members.

Scope of the Study

Purpose

This study was designed to be a formative evaluation of the thirteen Canada studies kits currently being developed within Alberta. Assessment reports were provided to the development teams for use in possible revisions of these units. Information within these reports was organized around the following areas:

1.0 Strengths of the Kit

2.0 Concerns about the Kit

- 2.1 Concerns raised by Pilot Students
- 2.2 Concerns raised by Pilot Teachers
- 2.3 Concerns about Internal Consistency
- 2.4 Concerns about Consistency with Current Social Studies Practice
- 2.5 Concerns about Congruency with the Alberta Social Studies Program
- 2.6 Concerns about the Significance of the Canadian Content Selected

3.0 Suggestions for Consideration

Procedures

A number of instruments for obtaining systematic information concerning each of the thirteen kits were designed and used in the study:

1. Instrument for content analysis of each kit (Appendix I).
2. Instrument for obtaining pilot teacher assessment of the kits (Appendix II).
3. Instruments for obtaining pilot student assessment of the kits (Appendix III).

Data obtained by means of these instruments were used in the compilation of

a report on each kit (Appendix IV). Each of the thirteen reports was presented and discussed with the appropriate team who had been responsible for the development of the units. The study was completed over a six month period (January 4, 1977 to June 30, 1977).

Though sufficient questionnaires were mailed for every teacher and student involved in the pilot classes of the thirteen kits, the returns varied across the grade levels:

SUMMARY OF PILOT CLASSES

	Canadian Content Kits for each Grade													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Int.	10	11	12	Totals
Total Number of Pilot-Classes	6	5	5	5	4	8	5	8	7	7	5	5	4	74
Pilot-Teacher Returns	5	4	5	4	3	8	3	6	7	7	4	4	3	63
Pilot-Student Returns	101	108	119	107	60	185	96	148	172	141	48	116	24	1425

Questions For The Study

How effective has the process of program development been in producing quality social studies materials? Quality was defined in terms of the following questions:

Internal Consistency

Is there consistency between and among the objectives, content, resources, and strategies of each kit? The units were examined for linkages among the intents, activities, and content.

In the majority of the kits questions were posed about internal consistency. Key concerns were raised to help in refining these linkages:

1. Should there be an overall value issue to provide focus for the kit?

2. Should a master chart be prepared showing where each objective is developed in the kit?

3. Should a mechanism that would help students and teachers maintain focus on the central theme of the kit be devised?

4. Should the activity sequences designed to develop the concepts/generalizations be made more explicit for teachers?

Before the kits are finally produced and distributed, they should be re-examined to determine to what extent these questions have been addressed.

Inter-unit Consistency

Is there a logical and sequential consistency among the kits for the various grades? The legitimacy of raising this issue is questionable because the process used to develop the kits did little to ensure cross-grade consistency. Time needed for detailed articulation among the kits was not provided to the development teams, and there was no agreed upon master plan or framework for skills, concepts, and values. For example, skill development in social studies programs is usually based on the following principles:

(a) Skills are best taught functionally in the context of a unit.

(b) The program of instruction should be flexible enough to allow skills to be taught as they are needed by learners.

(c) The learner should understand the purpose of the skill and have need for developing it.

(d) Skill development is most effective when there is systematic and continuous application.

(e) Skill instruction should be presented at increasing levels of difficulty across the grades.

The manner in which the Canadian Content kits were developed allowed principles (a), (b) and (c) to operate, but did not accommodate (d) and (e). Questions were raised in each kit suggesting that skill sequences be made explicit.

The manner in which skill objectives were stated and developed within the units makes it virtually impossible to provide a meaningful cross-grade description of skills. Rather, the balance, comprehensiveness, and sequencing of skills tends to be random across the thirteen kits. Questions were raised about the vagueness or the "taken for granted nature" of skill sequences.

The lack of a master plan for the development of specific skills was an opportunity lost in the project. Such a plan may have provided not only scope and sequence to the overall Canada Studies Program, but also given direction to the individual development teams. As shown by the following charts, the questions discussed with many of these teams were addressed to making skill objectives and sequences explicit for teachers and students.

Program Consistency

To what degree are the kits congruent with the intents of the Alberta Social Studies Program? Criteria were selected from Responding to Change and

KITS FOR WHICH QUESTIONS WERE RAISED CONCERNING SKILL DEVELOPMENT SEQUENCES

QUESTIONS POSED:	GRADE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	INT
Does the kit contribute to the development of significant social/inquiry skills?	*	*	*	*	*	*							
Are specific skill development sequences included? Is provision made for the sequential development of skills?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*		*
Are social science research methods included in the skill objectives?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*			*
Is attention given to social action skills?	*			*	*	*		*					*

* Indicates questions were raised

Experiences in Decision Making, and were addressed as questions to each of the units. For all of the kits the questions raised were aimed at refining congruency with the provincial handbooks. The specific questions posed can be found in the reports in Appendix 4. The following chart provides a summary of those units for which questions were raised concerning their congruency with the Alberta Program.

External Consistency

The questions posed for this analysis was: "Do the kits provide opportunities to utilize strategies and materials that are supported by current informed opinion of what constitutes good practice in the teaching of social studies?" Criteria for this assessment were taken from up-dated characteristics identified originally by J. C. McLendon and F. Penix What Research Says to the Teacher: Teaching the Social Studies. National Education Association, 1968. Current literature on social studies practice was used in selecting these characteristics. For each of the kits questions were raised on the basis of these selected criteria. A summary is provided in the following chart.

Significance

How significant is the Canadian content selected within the kits? Students reacted positively to most of the kits. They felt that they learned things which they didn't know before, and that their knowledge of Canada was broadened. Further, teachers were overwhelmingly favourable in their comments regarding having Canadian content available for classroom use. They generally perceived the content as being worthwhile and relevant for students. However, the initial selection of the content presented developers of the thirteen units with some problems:

1. How could the kit developers working independently of other teams ensure that each kit would form a logical

SUMMARY OF KITS FOR WHICH QUESTIONS WERE RAISED CONCERNING CONGRUENCY WITH THE ALBERTA PROGRAM

CRITERIA QUESTIONS	GRADE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Int.
Does it focus on a pertinent value issue?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*					*
Does it have future use for learners?	*				*	*		*					*
Does it help learners understand a significant social problem?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*			*
Is the kit relevant to the needs and interests of learners?			*						*				
Does it contribute to the development of significant social/inquiry skills?	*	*	*	*	*	*							
Have the concepts outlined in the kit been developed? Do the concepts outlined form the bases of the generalizations developed?	*	*	*	*	*	*					*	*	*
Are specific skill development sequences included?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*		*
Is the primary focus of the kit value inquiry?	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*			*

SUMMARY OF KITS FOR WHICH QUESTIONS WERE RAISED REGARDING CONGRUENCY WITH CURRENT SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICE

* Indicates questions were raised

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND PROGRAMS	GRADE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Int.
Objectives are definite and functional as opposed to grandiose and all inclusive.	*	*	*		*	*		*		*			*
Social science research methods are included in the skill objective.	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*			*
Unit content is chosen in relation to the learner's present knowledge and interest.	*			*		*		*	*				
A wide range of suggested subject matter, learning activities and materials are provided from which the teacher may select.			*										*
Content takes into account the interests and information children have from travel and mass media.	*		*	*	*	*		*			*		*
Contemporary social change and recent scholarly study are incorporated.													
Current affairs is an integral part of the unit.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
Social issues are examined.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					*
Multiple viewpoints are presenced.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					*
Provision is made for the sequential development of skills.						*							
Original data sources are utilized.	*					*							
Instructional methods designed for specific purposes are utilized.	*	*	*	*	*	*							*
A variety of approaches and procedures are used.						*							*
Tactics are designed to involve learners in processes leading to advanced understanding and skills.		*	*	*	*	*							
Attention is given to: - social action skills - learning through community experiences - use of commercial television	* *	 *		*	*	* * 		*			 * *		*
Provision is made for self and group evaluation.		*		*	*	*		*		*			*

and integral part of a total and comprehensive view of Canada?

2. Without predetermined criteria for knowledge selection, how could kit developers avoid overlap or imbalance in content coverage?

Although the legitimacy of this post hoc content analysis of the kits is questionable, it is justified in terms of the public expectations of the project. Parents and the public at large seem to assume that as a result of this Canadian content project, students can be held accountable for some logically organized Canadian content. Somewhere then, that content had to be specified. It would have been preferable that this task was undertaken prior to construction of the thirteen kits.

At what level (Canada, regional, Alberta) do the kits help develop student perceptions of Canadian identity? The following questions and generalizations have been selected from current literature on Canadian content and are proposed by authors as criteria for selecting significant Canadian content. This literature included varied sources such as the Symons Report on Canadian content (To Know Ourselves), occasional papers of the Canada Studies Foundation, and selected newspaper/magazine articles.

An examination of the charts gives rise to the following questions:

1. Have issues dealing with the future of Canada been adequately covered?

2. Are we justified in ignoring Canadians' responsibilities to those outside our borders in a Canadian Content Program?

LEVEL AT WHICH THE KITS HELP DEVELOP STUDENT PERCEPTION OF CANADIAN IDENTITY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Int.
Who are we? (identity)	C	C	A C		C		C	C	C	A	C	C	C
Where are we in time? (present)					C	C	C	C	C	A		C	C
Where are we in space? (geography)	C	A C	A C		C	C						C	R
Where have we been? (history)			A		C	A R C	C	C	C	A	C		C
Where are we going? (future)							C		C	A	C	C	
What do we possess? (resources/talent)	C	C	A C	A	C	C						C	C
What are our responsibilities to ourselves? (Canadian)				A	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	C
What are our responsibilities to others? (World)							C					C	

A = Alberta R = Regional C = Canada

3. Is it sound program planning to concentrate the major geography learnings in the elementary school?

4. In a country where regional disparities play such a prominent role in national life can the absence of attention to regionalism be defended?

5. Should the topics of urbanization and industrialization receive more emphasis in a Canadian Content Program?

6. Should the external influences upon Canada be emphasized almost exclusively at the secondary school level?

FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Certain patterns are evident in the preceeding charts. The number of questions raised at the elementary level may make it appropriate to hire overall editors for the division I and II kits.

2. Should a series of short "How To Do It" booklets be written and be included within each kit addressed to specific concerns. We would recommend the following:
   (a) How to integrate current events within the on-going units.
   (b) How to utilize commercial television as an integral part of the units.
   (c) How to incorporate certain social science research methods such as surveying, interviewing, polling, and document analysis.
   (d) How to develop social action skills.

   These booklets should be written for the non-specialist social studies teacher at all grade levels.

3. Should a technical pamphlet based on the pilot student and teacher reactions to the unit be included with each kit.

4. Should the kits be produced before the questions posed relative to internal consistency, fit with current social

studies practice and congruency with the Alberta Social Studies Program have been resolved.

5. Should teachers be alerted in the teaching guide of each kit that there is no sequential development of concepts, generalizations, or skills across the grades.

6. Should there be quality control instituted by:
   (a) Limiting the initial production to make possible summative evaluation of the kits after one years use.
   (b) Examining carefully the feasability of making the required revisions within existing deadlines.

7. Should summary charts outlining the Canadian content covered in the overall program be included with each kit.

APPENDIX I:

Program Analysis Form

PROGRAM ANALYSIS FORM

(D. Massey and W. Werner)

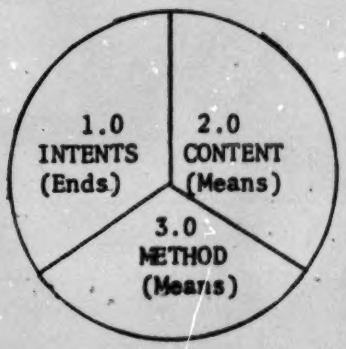
Unit_____

Grade_____

Analyst_____

Date_____

This analysis form emphasizes three components of any unit:



1.0 INTENTS - What is intended by the unit developers?

Rationale - Why was the unit developed?

- What is the justification for the unit?

Objectives - What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are students to obtain through the unit?

2.0 CONTENT - What display material is covered by the unit developers?

3.0 METHOD - How is the content to be used in attaining the intents?

1.0 INTENTS

(Rationale, knowledge objectives, skill objectives, attitude objectives)

1.1 Completeness: Is there a complete and explicit statement of intents? Knowledge objectives (Concepts and Generalizations)? Skill objectives? Value Objectives?

1.2 Clarity: Are the intents clearly stated and easy to understand? Are they kept within the teacher's view at all times?

1.3 Scope: Is the scope of the unit of sufficient breadth? Is it too general or too narrow?

1.4 Appropriateness: Are the intents appropriate to student grade level and to a range of student interests and abilities?

1.5 Realism: Are the intents achievable within the time and resource constraints?

1.6 Internal Consistency: Are the objectives consistent with the rationale?

1.7 Provincial Consistency: Are the intents consistent with the provincial guidelines?

1.8 Inter-unit Consistency: Is there sequential consistency with prior and subsequent units (concepts, topics, skills, attitudes)? Does it have continuity?

1.9 External Consistency: Are the intents consistent with current social studies literature?

1.10 Orientation:

	Intended Emphasis (Rationale, objectives)	Actual Emphasis (Content, learning activities, questions)
Designative: What was (past) What is (present) What will be (future)		
Appraisive: What should be		
Prescriptive: What should be done		

2.0 CONTENT

(Student Materials, Teacher Guide, Suggested Resources)

2.1 Bias/Stereotypes: Is there evidence of bias? (ethnic, religious, political, sex roles, multicultural, regional, occupational)

2.2 Accuracy: Are there misstatements or omissions? Is there evidence of inaccuracies?

2.3 Currency: Does the content have currency and futurity? Are the styles, examples, and expressions dated?

2.4 Congruency: Does the content match the stated objectives? Are the objectives developed?

2.5 Readability: Is the level of reading difficulty (vocabulary, style of presentation, sentence structure) appropriate for student differences?

2.6 Interest: Is it interesting, attractive, meaningful and relevant to students? Does it start from their experiences?

2.7 Organization: Is the content well organized? Are the ideas clearly stated? Is it easy to understand? Is there sequencing? Is there a table of contents? Summary charts? Advanced organizers? Does the format keep the intents visible to the teacher?

2.8 Variety: Are a variety of resources suggested? Are different materials provided? Is a bibliography of sources provided to facilitate further teacher planning?

2.9 Significance: Is it worthwhile for students to pursue? Can the time allotted to the unit be justified?

2.10 Depth: Is it treated in sufficient depth and detail rather than in survey fashion? Is it covered adequately? Is it comprehensive?

2.11 Redundancy: Is the content new rather than redundant to students?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

(Teaching-Learning Strategies)

3.1 Variety: Are a variety of student and teacher strategies suggested for opener, developmental, and closure lessons?

3.2 Emphasis: Is the intended emphasis upon transmission of content (didactic), student activities (inquiry, discovery, experiential), or both?

3.3 Consistency: Does the methodology match the objectives?

3.4 Flexibility: Are alternatives suggested for different teaching styles and learning styles? Accommodation of different interests and choices?

3.5 Level of Questions and Thinking:

Literal Level? Remembering, Recognizing (What, who, where, when)

Application Level? Applying, Analyzing, Synthesizing, Creating, Hypothesizing (Why? How? What if?)

Evaluative Level? Judging, Criticizing, Clarifying Values

3.6 Creativity: Is creativity encouraged?

3.7 Student Involvement: Is student decision-making encouraged? Are students involved in the formulation of goals and selection of content? Do students have choices in the unit? Does it incorporate the experiences they bring to the classroom? Are they interested?

3.8 Individualization: Does it allow for individualized pacing (rates of speed and output) rather than group pacing? Must all students do the same thing at the same time in the same way?

3.9 Open-Endedness: Does it encourage a variety of student responses rather than restricting responses? Is it divergent rather than convergent?

3.10 Evaluation: Do evaluative strategies accommodate student differences? Matched with intents rather than content? Do students have opportunity for self and group evaluation?

4.0 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Strengths: What in your opinion is the overall strength of this unit?

4.2 Concerns: What in your opinion is the overall weakness of this unit?

4.3 Suggestions: What suggestions for improvement would you recommend?

APPENDIX II

Pilot Teacher Letter and Questionnaire

CANADIAN CONTENT EVALUATION

Department of Elementary Education
University of Alberta
EDMONTON, Alberta T6G 2G5

TO: Pilot Teachers of Canadian Content Kits

DATE: February 22, 1977

FROM: Don Massey and Walt Werner

Please find enclosed two surveys:

(1) a teacher survey, and

(2) a student survey.

These surveys solicit teacher and student evaluations of the Canadian Content Kits being piloted. These kits will be revised on the basis of your assessments. Because Alberta Education will commit substantial funds for the production and distribution of these kits throughout the province, your comments help assure that the monies spent will result in quality social studies programs.

Your reservations and recommendations about their instructional quality will be treated confidentially. Do not judge the technical quality (e.g., the quality of sound, drawing, and color) as ACCESS will be responsible for this after the piloting is completed.

The student survey is concerned with pupil interest in the kits. You may wish to discuss the questions with them, as well as explain that their concerns will be used for revising the kits.

Please return the questionnaires immediately upon completion of the kit or by March 25, 1977. A stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Call us at 432-5093 if you require any further information.

DM/sp

Encl.

cc: Social Studies Consultants
Dr. D. Ledgerwood
Mr. M. Kowalchuk
Dr. K. Nixon

APPENDIX III

Pilot Student Questionnaires

Grade 1
Grade 2
Grade 3
Grades 4 - 12

DIRECTIONS TO TEACHERS:

Explain that the questions are about the things students did during the study on Canada. The teachers who constructed the unit want student comments on how the materials may be improved.

Read each item to the children, allowing enough time for them to try each item. The questions are not speed tests. By administering the test item-by-item the instructions are reinforced. Teachers are able to adjust pace in keeping with the characteristics of the students being questioned. By reading the directions aloud it is possible to reduce the influence of reading skills on the survey results.

MOOSE ON THE LOOSE *(Grade One)*

Look at the faces below.
Some faces are happy and some are sad.
Put a mark (X) under the face to show how you feel about the things you did while learning about Canadian families.

LISTENING TO MIGHTY MOOSE AND SAVEAK

WORKING CANADA PUZZLES

DRAWING MAPS

LOOKING AT THE CARTOON SLIDES

1. Think about the things you learned in "Moose on the Loose".
2. Finish the sentences below.

The thing I liked best was _____

_____

_____

_____

The thing I didn't like at all was _____

_____

_____

_____

EXPLORING CANADIAN NEIGHBORHOODS *(Grade Two)*

Look at the faces below.
Some faces are happy and some are sad.
Put a mark (X) under the face to show how you feel about the things you did while learning about Canadian Neighborhoods

LOOKING AT SLIDES OF NEIGHBORHOODS

READING THE STORIES ABOUT NEIGHBORHOODS

PLAYING THE MATCH GAME

PLAYING FISHERMAN'S LUCK

PLAYING THE CROSS CANADA GAME

PLAYING THE POST CARD GAME

COME NORTH WITH ME *(Grade Three)*

Look at the faces below.
Some faces are happy and some are sad.
Put a mark (X) under the face to show how you feel about the things you did while learning about northern Canadian communities.

LOOKING AT SLIDES OF NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

LISTENING TO NORTHERN PEOPLE ON TAPES

DISCUSSING MANY PICTURES OF NORTHERN LIFE

PLAYING THE WHERE GAME

PLAYING THE PROVINCO GAME

1. Think about the things you did as you learned about Canadian neighborhoods.
2. Finish each sentence below.

The thing I liked best was _____

_____

_____

_____

The thing I didn't like at all was _____

_____

_____

_____

READING STORIES WRITTEN BY NORTHERN STUDENTS

COLORING OR DRAWING PICTURES

WRITING STORIES